Use of Kulhars

*274. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:
SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the cost per "Kulhar" being used in the Railways and the number of "Khulhars" required per day alongwith the amount spent so far;

(b) whether there are reports that these "Kulhars" are not environment friendly and will ultimately damage the soil;

(c) whether there is a saving in expenditure after the introduction of kulhars in place of plastic cups; and

(d) whether the use of paper-cups would be more cost-effective and eco-friendly in comparison to Kulhars being used?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) The cost of Kulhars being used varies from region to region. At present the unit cost of Kulhars being procured by departmental catering units on Indian Railways ranges from 20 paise to 1.10 Rupees. Procurement of Kulhars by departmental catering units as well as licensee operated catering units is based on the passenger demand. The requirement of Kulhars per day is need based and the collection of this data is dynamic and voluminous. Hence, the total requirement of Kulhars per day and the total amount spent thereon can not be ascertained exactly.

(b) There are no official reports that Kulhars are not environment friendly and will ultimately damage the soil.

(c) and (d) As an environment friendly measure, railways are discouraging the use of plastics. The cost of Kulhars and paper cups varies from region to region. Both paper-cups and Kulhars are eco-friendly. However, introduction of Kulhars will improve employment in the rural sector.

Expansion of V.S.P.

*275. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Vizag Steel Plant (VSP) is currently in the red and if so, its cumulative losses as on 1st April, 2004;

(b) whether the plant has started gearing up for expansion of its capacity;

(c) whether the Steel plant has changed and developed a new working system empowering work force with a lot of training programme;

(d) whether any detailed expansion programme costing nearly Rs. 3000 crores has been prepared;

(e) whether any foreign assistance will also be required; and

(f) if so, the total amount required for its expansion and by when the losses are likely to be wiped out?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No Sir. The company has made net profits of Rs. 521 crores during 2002-03 and of Rs. 1521 crs. (Prov.) during the year 2003-04. It has continued its good performance during the current financial year 2004-05 by making a net profit of Rs. 345 crs. (Prov.) during the 1st quarter. However, the existing cumulative loss as on 1.4.2004 is Rs. 2914 crores (prov.).

(b) A corporate plan, envisaging expansion of VSP from the present capacity of 3.0 million tons of liquid steel to 10.2 million tons of liquid steel, in three phases, has been prepared and approved by the Board of RINL. The Government has however, not received any proposal on the expansion of VSP in terms of the corporate plan.

(c) The company has empowered its employees by effective training for building and sustaining required competence and skills.

(d) the Corporate Plan approved by the Board of Directors of RINL (VSP), envisages expansion of plant capacity from 3 million tons of liquid steel to 10.2 million tons of liquid steel by the year 2020 in three phases. Preparation of a detailed expansion plan in terms of the corporate plan is underway in the company.

(e) and (f) the corporate plan does not seek any foreign assistance. It envisages an expenditure of Rs. 2275 crores for the 1st phase of the expansion plan. The company hopes to wipe out its accumulated losses by the year 2006-07 provided favourable market conditions continue to remain.